

American Communal Societies Quarterly

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Front cover illustration: "Shaker Orange Grove. St. Cloud, Fla."
Postcard, Communal Societies Collection, Hamilton College.

From the Editor –

We hope to help our readers shake off some of the winter chill with this special issue of *ACSQ* dedicated to the Shaker community at Narcoossee, Florida, sometimes referred to as "Olive Branch." This relatively unstudied southern outpost of Shakerism existed from 1896 until 1924 under the supervision of the Mount Lebanon Bishopric. It consisted of one family managed by Elder Ezra J. Stewart that never exceeded twenty Believers.

From September 16, 1909, until April 14, 1910, the *St. Cloud Tribune* of nearby St. Cloud, Florida, ran a series of articles by Elder Stewart and others describing the Shaker community and its agricultural enterprises in detail. Remarkably, this series was illustrated with photographs of the Shaker community and its associated properties. This newspaper is exceedingly rare, as are most printed items from the early days of settlement and development in Florida.

In this issue of *ACSQ* we are pleased to present all of Elder Stewart's articles in their entirety, as well as other content relevant to the Shakers from these issues of the newspaper. We have complemented these texts with images of Narcoossee published on contemporary postcards. We hope that by making this primary source material more widely available we can spur further research into this fascinating sidebar of Shaker history. Who would have imagined Shakers farming bananas, pineapples, and oranges? Or giving advice on how to hunt alligators?

Best wishes for 2017!

– Christian Goodwillie, Associate Editor

